

# Exodus 34:12

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Take heed to thyself, lest thou make a covenant with the inhabitants of the land whither thou goest, lest it be for a snare in the midst of thee:

## Analysis

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God warns against making covenants (בְּרִית, berit) with Canaan's inhabitants, calling such alliances a 'snare' (מוֹקֵשׁ, moqesh—a hunter's trap). Covenant with God demands exclusive loyalty; political/religious treaties with idolatrous nations would inevitably lead to syncretism. This principle applies to believers today regarding 'unequal yokes' (2 Cor 6:14-18).

## Historical Context

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Ancient Near Eastern treaties often included religious elements, requiring recognition of each party's gods. Israel's covenant with YHWH precluded such arrangements.

## Related Passages

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**Romans 1:17** — The righteous shall live by faith

**James 2:17** — Faith and works

## Study Questions

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1. What modern 'covenants' or alliances might compromise your exclusive loyalty to God?

2. How can you maintain cultural engagement without religious compromise?

## Interlinear Text

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הָשָׁמֶר	לִבְּ	פָּן	תִּכְרֹת	בְּרִית	לְיוֹשְׁבֵי
Take heed	H0	H6435	to thyself lest thou make	a covenant	with the inhabitants
H8104			H3772	H1285	H3427
הָאָרֶץ	אֲשֶׁר	אֶתְּ	בָּא	עַל יְהוָה	פָּן
of the land	H834	H859	whither thou goest	H5921	H6435
H776			H935		H1961
לְמוֹקֶשׁ	בְּקֶרֶבְךָ:				
lest it be for a snare	in the midst				
H4170	H7130				

## Additional Cross-References

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**Deuteronomy 7:2** (Covenant): And when the LORD thy God shall deliver them before thee; thou shalt smite them, and utterly destroy them; thou shalt make no covenant with them, nor shew mercy unto them:

**Deuteronomy 7:16** (Parallel theme): And thou shalt consume all the people which the LORD thy God shall deliver thee; thine eye shall have no pity upon them: neither shalt thou serve their gods; for that will be a snare unto thee.